

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring SGT Jacob Schmuecker.

REMEMBERING LADY BIRD JOHNSON

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, when Lady Bird Johnson passed away on the afternoon of July 11, 2007, the United States mourned the loss of a dignified and compassionate First Lady. Even though she is gone, she has left us with the legacy of her beautification of America. Through her diligent efforts, Mrs. Johnson was not only an advocate for the natural beauty of America but also of the beauty and strength of its people. Sharon and I extend our deepest sympathy to her daughters Lynda and Luci, their families, her friends, and all of those whose lives have been touched by her life's work.

As President Lyndon B. Johnson entered the White House in one of our Nation's most harrowing moments, Mrs. Johnson stood by her husband with poise and courage that helped comfort a wounded nation. Her service to our country would go even further as she became a leading voice for preserving and defending America's natural resources. Here in the Nation's Capital, people can't help but be reminded of Mrs. Johnson's vigorous work to adorn Washington, DC, with flowers, giving us an aesthetic that all Americans could take pride in and enjoy.

I have always shared Mrs. Johnson's deeply held love for the beauty of the United States, from the mountains of West Virginia to the plains of Texas. It was because of her commitment to the environment and the splendor of our country that the Beautification Act of 1965 was passed. She strove to line our highways with wildflowers and still found time to enjoy walking through the national parks that she fought to protect.

In addition to her work with the environment, I truly admire her efforts to address poverty in the United States. Under President Johnson, the VISTA program was enacted, sending out volunteers to improve the conditions of impoverished communities. I can proudly say that as a VISTA volunteer in Emmons, WV, I saw firsthand the immense benefits of this program for participants and for the communities they serve.

I will never forget her devotion to her husband, her family, and her country. I will never forget her passion fighting for civil rights and against poverty. Nor will I ever forget her determination to leave a beautiful America for future generations.

Lady Bird Johnson, again, held my sincerest respect and appreciation. To her family and the people of Texas, I offer my deepest sympathies. Mrs. Johnson was a valuable public servant, an inspiration and a friend. More than anything else, she was an irreplaceable First Lady.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the minimum wage increase, which takes effect today.

Today, millions of hard-working Americans will finally receive the first increase of a \$2.10 raise in the Federal minimum wage. Today, we are putting an end to a decade-long stagnant wage that has kept those who are working their hardest at the bottom of the ladder. Today, they are getting the chance that everyone in this country deserves—the opportunity to build a better life.

Now, \$2.10 may not sound like much to most Americans. But that small increase will make a difference in the pockets and in the lives of millions of Americans. Those \$2.10 add up to more than \$4,400 more every year enough to help a low-income family depending on a minimum wage income to afford 2 years of child care, a year and a half in utility bills, or a year of tuition at a public college.

I am also proud that my State of New Jersey has not waited for Congress to do what is right. Instead, New Jersey has taken it upon itself to increase the State minimum wage far in advance of Congress, which now is at \$7.15 per hour. New Jersey's minimum wage has given more than a quarter million workers the opportunity to build a better life for themselves and their families.

And today, all Americans earning minimum wage will have that same opportunity to build a better life. In enacting the first minimum wage increase in over a decade, Congress took a critical first step towards correcting a grave injustice. For far too long, we have let some of our hardest working employees—those who prepare our food, clean our offices, treat us at the doctor, and guard our buildings at night—see their wages erode by 10 years of inflation.

Ten years is far too long for those who work round the clock, hoping to save a little extra for groceries, for those working so they can buy school supplies or clothes for their children, or for those saving so one day they can live in a place they are proud to call home.

Today, we should also commit that never again will we let this injustice persist for 10 years. The increase going into effect today is an important improvement, but it is not the end of the battle. An increase in the minimum wage is only part of the solution.

We cannot ignore that the income gap has been widening—and now it has taken on a new twist. We no longer have inequality just between those living comfortably and those struggling to make ends meet. Income is now more concentrated at the top than it has been in the past 70 years. In fact, as the wealthiest 1 percent have seen their income grow by 20 percent or more within the past few years, everyone else has seen their income grow by less than 4 percent.

And that inequality is ever too real for women and minorities, who are more likely to be minimum wage earners.

So while increasing the minimum wage is just one step toward closing the income gap, it is an important step.

Ultimately, a wage increase is about fairness, about ensuring all Americans, not just those at the top, can share in the American dream.

Before today, 13 million minimum wage workers did not have the chance to share in that dream.

Before today, 4 million Latinos and African Americans earned less than \$7.25 an hour with no expectation that their wages would rise.

Before today, nearly 7 million women, who make up well over half of minimum wage workers, would not have seen their wages increase.

And before today, a minimum wage earner with a family of three would be making \$6,000 below the poverty level. Before today, that family would not have a way out of poverty and into prosperity.

We have changed the course, not just for minimum wage workers but for our country. We have finally taken steps toward providing greater equality and given our hardest workers and their families the chance to earn a wage of dignity and respect.

A wage increase is only a downpayment on our promise to all Americans—it is a preview of what is to come. Democrats pledge to continue to change the course to ensure all Americans and their families have a fair shot at achieving the American dream.

Thank you. I yield the floor

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING IRVIN L. TRUJILLO

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Mr. Irvin L. Trujillo for receiving the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award. He is one of only 11 artists nationally recognized with this award for his work. The chairman of the NEA, Dana Gioia, will personally deliver the award to Mr. Trujillo this Sunday in Santa Fe. Mr. Trujillo, a Chimayo native, is part of the ever-growing population of talented artists that reside in New Mexico. He is a seventh-generation Chimayo weaver.

Art is such a big part of the New Mexican way of life. Artists from all over the world dream of showcasing their art in one of the many New Mexico Art galleries. Art is a great outlet of creativity and emotion for those who experience its beauty and wonder. Art can take up many avenues; it can be a painting or a piece of pottery, a woven rug or even a photograph. New Mexico is home to many galleries featuring such pieces of art. I am proud to represent a State so full of culture and creativity.

I am proud to be from a State with such a rich artistic culture. Taos and Santa Fe are famous for their world-renowned art galleries. Other areas of the State also demonstrate creative ideas. The deep Native American culture of New Mexico's tribes brings ornate turquoise jewelry and handmade pottery. Las Vegas and Ruidoso also have a vibrant art scene. New Mexico continues to be in the forefront of ever-evolving art community.

Congratulations again, Mr. Trujillo, on your prestigious award. Thank you for your continued pledge to explore and demonstrate your artistic abilities for all of us to enjoy. •

RECOGNITION OF CHAIRMAN ALLEN FOREMAN

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the accomplishments of Chairman Allen Foreman, who has recently retired as chairman of the Klamath tribes in Klamath County, OR.

During Chairman Foreman's 8-year tenure leading the tribe, he was instrumental in furthering the goals and aspirations of the Klamath tribal members. His leadership and vision were critical in the development of the new tribal headquarters in Chiloquin as well as a new dental, medical clinic and pharmacy and the construction of many new homes for tribal members.

Chairman Foreman has shown his dedication to the tribe and to the people of Klamath County in many ways. His focus on rural economic development and his respect for our natural resources have earned him high respect in the community. Chairman Foreman is known as a man who can be trusted and a man who will work with anyone to accomplish a common goal for the good of the community. His devotion to the Klamath tribes is evident in the fact that while he has recently retired as chairman of the tribes, he will remain a member of the Tribal Council at large to continue his service to the tribes.

Mr. President, I am extremely proud of the successes being exhibited by the Klamath tribes and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Chairman Foreman. The Klamath tribes have a saying that proclaims, "The Klamath Tribes. . . . Respecting the Past. . . . Living the Present. . . . And Together we can work to build a brighter future!" Chairman Allen Foreman has epitomized this mantra, and I am confident that his successor, Chairman Joseph Kirk, will follow in his footsteps and follow the path laid out by their Klamath tribes forefathers. •

TRIBUTE TO MORT BISHOP, JR.

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, as a native and resident of Pendleton, OR, I have enjoyed a lifelong affection for the Pendleton Round-Up, which is quite simply America's finest rodeo. Pendleton Woolen Mills locally based

and family owned for more than 140 years has sponsored the Round-Up both financially and with merchandise for as long as I can remember. A great deal of credit for the continuing success of both the Round-Up and Woolen Mills is owed to the leadership and vision of C.M. "Mort" Bishop, Jr. This remarkable Oregonian passed away on July 11 at the age of 82. I wish to pay tribute to his life and legacy.

Mort was a proud member of what has been termed the "greatest generation" and, like so many of that generation, he wore our country's uniform into battle during World War II. As a U.S. marine, Mort served with the 5th and 14th Battalions in the Pacific theater and participated in the liberation of Guam in July 1944.

After returning home from the war, Mort joined the family business: Pendleton Woolen Mills. Mort helped guide this iconic Oregon company for nearly 50 years, eventually succeeding his father as company president. Most recently, Mort served next to his brother, 'Brot,' as co-vice chairman.

Even while managing a demanding business, Mort always found time to give back to his community and his State. From the Oregon Historical Society to the Boy Scouts of America, from Willamette University to the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation and the University of Oregon Foundation, Mort generously gave his time, talent, and treasure to countless worthy causes. But let there be no doubt, the cause held closest to Mort's heart was the Pendleton Round Up. I knew that every September I could count on seeing Mort and his wonderful family enjoying the nearly 100-year-old rodeo.

Mort also held a close friendship with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, who have played an integral role in the annual Round-Up. Indeed, the design inspirations for Pendleton Woolen Mills blankets originate on the Umatilla reservation. In 2001, Mort was honored as the grand marshal for the Round-Up's Westward Ho! Parade. The Umatilla and Nez Perce Indian tribes have also honored him with the Indian name "Caacaa Kuta," which means "just right doer of things." And just 2 months ago, Mort was inducted into the Pendleton Round-Up Hall of Fame.

Mr. President, I am proud to have had Mort Bishop as a friend. I join with many other Oregonians in extending our condolences to Mort's family. Mort is survived by four children, nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and his brother- and sister-in-law. As long as there is a Pendleton Round-Up and as long as there is a Pendleton Woolen Mills, Mort Bishop, Jr., will always be remembered as a "just right doer of things." •

HONORING BACKYARD FARMS

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to celebrate an exceptional small business from my home State of Maine that is

enabling New England consumers to enjoy fresh, locally grown, and healthy tomatoes on a year-round basis. Located in Madison, Backyard Farms is a large-scale tomato producer that has invested over \$20 million into what is now Maine's largest building and one of the world's most technologically advanced facilities.

Backyard Farms, which operates the largest greenhouse in New England, employs 115 hard-working individuals who collectively yield an astonishing 1 million tomatoes per week—which adds up to 7,700 tons of tomatoes annually. With New Englanders consuming an average of 300 million fresh tomatoes per year, Backyard Farms has the potential to capture an extensive share of this market. Backyard Farms' tomatoes are certainly fresh, as it sells its product to stores less than 8 hours away. That means that tomatoes picked one day are on store shelves all across Maine and New England the next.

In addition to its magnificent tomatoes, Backyard Farms is striving to make its facility a green—or energy efficient—building by using the most environmentally friendly technology available. The 25-acre greenhouse uses efficient technologies including rainwater reclamation, high-efficiency boilers, and thermal blankets to produce juicy tomatoes. Furthermore, Backyard Farms utilizes natural methods to grow its wonderful produce. Bees take care of the pollination, and tomatoes are kept healthy by implementing biological controls, such as parasitic wraps and ladybugs, rather than pesticides and fungicides. The work of those at Backyard Farms proves that conservation does not necessarily have to hinder effectiveness and efficiency.

Backyard Farms prides itself on the quality of its product. On each box of tomatoes shipped to local stores, it is written, "wicked good tomatoes from right nearby." This motto emphasizes Backyard Farms' local nature and its commitment to the community through its highly sustainable business practices. Backyard Farms plans to build 3 to 4 additional greenhouses on at least 17 more acres. This would allow Backyard Farms to increase its produce output to include cucumbers, peppers, eggplant, and culinary herbs. Such an expansion would have an immensely positive impact on the Maine economy by adding as many as 200 new employees. I look forward to the groundbreaking for this expansion, scheduled to occur later this month.

It is particularly inspirational that Backyard Farms has proven that a region known for its cooler temperatures and short growing season can in fact expand its agricultural production by combining advanced technologies with an innovative entrepreneurial spirit. Backyard Farms provides us with a paragon of smart economic development. I commend chief executive officer Peter Sellew, cofounder Arie van der Giessen, and all of the employees of